

2005 Report of Accomplishments (July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005)

Chelan County Conservation District



Most Significant Natural Resource Accomplishment

This year, the District initiated a new cost share program utilizing Conservation Commission Implementation Grant funds. Previous cost share has been primarily provided through other grant sources and federal agency partnerships, with more emphasis on streamside landowners or wildlife benefits. The first participant under the new program upgraded his irrigation system to more efficient micro sprinklers and installed a soil moisture monitoring system to more accurately manage water application on the five-acre tract. The cooperator was extremely grateful to receive the assistance. Additional funds have been budgeted for the coming year with several potential projects already identified.



Mission of the Chelan County Conservation District (District)

The purpose of the Chelan County Conservation District is to encourage stewardship and conservation of all natural resources for current and future residents in Chelan County by:

- *Being an active advocate for wise land use and water management decisions.*
- *Promoting a reasonable approach to environmental problems.*
- *Providing local, voluntary, non-regulatory solutions to local environmental problems.*
- *Educating both adults and youth about natural resources stewardship.*
- *Monitoring and responding to future trends that affect the environment.*

Natural Resource Improvements in 2005 - Summary

- *Conservation planning, implementation of Best Management Practices, wildfire risk reduction, and restoration of riparian and upland areas were the focus of the District's work this year.*
- *Design, planning and permit acquisition for several major projects is in progress. While these activities cannot yet be documented as on-the-ground improvements, they are a necessary step that will allow the District to complete significant work in the near future.*
- *More than 77 acres of private land in high wildfire risk areas were treated to reduce fire fuels and create defensible space. Preventing wildfire in these areas not only reduces potential direct losses to life and property, but also helps to protect the watershed from the flooding, erosion and water quality degradation that often follow a fire.*

Water Quality Implementation

- *Eight agricultural producers were assisted with conservation plans in preparation for implementing a variety of Best Management Practices in the coming months. Practices include irrigation system improvements, soil moisture monitoring and irrigation scheduling, pasture planting recommendations and riparian restoration.*
- *25 cooperators implemented 27 practices on more than 113 acres through existing conservation plans.*
- *Four irrigation districts were introduced to the irrigation efficiencies and drought response programs and provided with information on opportunities available to them. In cooperation with South Douglas Conservation District, an irrigation water management seminar was presented for local landowners, and a video was produced to help provide broader access to the information.*
- *Potential cooperators for federal programs were provided information and were also assisted with the application process in partnership with the local NRCS staff.*
- *Approximately 15 acres were protected or restored with more than 3,300 trees and plants sold through the annual Tree Sale.*

Basic Funding and Local Funding

- *Basic Funding is used to support staff and cover expenses for general operations, including the following: conduct elections, hold meetings, develop and adopt budgets and plans, conduct evaluations and audits, purchase and repair equipment, maintain appropriate liability insurance, keep the public*

informed, and report employment, financial and operations information to a variety of agencies and entities, in addition to documenting, storing and safeguarding records.

- The District has been able to leverage considerable grant funds on behalf of the citizens. While Basic Funding and local match combined were just over \$20,000 for the year, the overall budget activity was more than \$460,000 and included 23 grants and contracts for work ranging from data collection and community planning to project development and implementation.

Professional Engineering

- Design and permitting applications were completed for the Mission Creek Habitat Restoration Project, along with the bidding process. Construction is anticipated in Fall 2005. The project will include fish screens for protection of juvenile salmon and instream habitat features along with bank restoration and protection in an area subject to high velocity erosion events from an intermittent irrigation return.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- The District fulfilled its commitment for technical assistance and maintenance on two existing projects. The landowners were able to continue the work started under this program.

Watershed Conservation/Habitat Restoration

- Continuing the work on the Leavenworth Neighborhoods Fire Education and Fuels Reduction project, 77 acres were treated to reduce wildfire fuels and develop defensible space around homes. The project includes a demonstration site depicting three different treatment levels. Area residents are provided opportunities to tour the site and learn more about defensible space, forest health and site management. Additional funding was received to continue fuels reduction work in this area during the coming year.
- A major project designed this year will upgrade an irrigation district diversion site to include more effective fish screening, more efficient operations and habitat improvements to the Wenatchee River.
- Monthly water quality monitoring was conducted on five sites in the Wenatchee watershed to support assessment and action plan development for both Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Watershed Planning processes ongoing in the basin. Reports were completed for the Temperature, DDT and Fecal Coliform parameters, and the Water Quality Subcommittee for the two projects began data analysis and identification of action items.

Community Collaboration & Coordination

- The Entiat WRIA 46 Management Plan was approved by Chelan County in September 2004, and became the first fully adopted plan in the state to include an instream flow component. Not content to sit and gaze at their accomplishments, the Planning Unit moved immediately into Phase 4 to begin concurrently developing an Implementation Plan and initiating improvement projects. Funding was secured for a restoration project and a water storage assessment, with design of the habitat and riparian planting work well on its way by July. Meanwhile, the watershed plan moved steadily through the rulemaking process, and was adopted August 3, 2005, just after the end of the reporting period.
- The District continued work on a county-wide Community Fire Plan, beginning with the communities in the urban interface areas identified to be at high risk for wildfire. Plans are complete or nearing completion for several communities, and include the following approximate acreages: Leavenworth - 60,000; Manson - 38,000; Peshastin - 38,000; Squilchuck - 56,000; and Union Valley - 42,000.

Marketing/Outreach & Education

- Conducted numerous outreach efforts to inform local landowners of various programs leading to implement of Best Management Practices.
- The Kids in the Creek program enjoyed another successful year, providing more than 350 high school students with in-depth, hands-on water quality education. The formal curriculum was also completed and published in cooperation with the US Fish & Wildlife Service, our major partner in the project.



Washington Conservation Districts assisting land managers with their conservation choices